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AUDITOR-CONTROLLER

**COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES  
DEPARTMENT OF AUDITOR-CONTROLLER**

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April 7, 2005

TO: Supervisor Gloria Molina, Chair  
Supervisor Yvonne B. Burke  
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky  
Supervisor Don Knabe  
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

FROM: J. Tyler McCauley   
Auditor-Controller

SUBJECT: **SOUTH BAY BRIGHT FUTURE FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY  
CONTRACT REVIEW**

We have completed a contract compliance review of South Bay Bright Future Foster Family Agency (Bright Future or Agency), a Foster Family Agency service provider. The review was conducted by the Auditor-Controller's Countywide Contract Monitoring Division.

**Background**

The Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) contracts with Bright Future, a private, non-profit, community-based organization to recruit, train, and certify foster care parents for the supervision of children placed in foster care by DCFS. Once Bright Future places a child, they are required to monitor the placement until the child is discharged from the program.

Bright Future is required to hire qualified social workers to provide case management and act as a liaison between DCFS and foster parents. Bright Future also is responsible for training and certifying foster parents. Bright Future oversees a total of 33 certified foster homes in which 67 DCFS children were placed. Bright Future is located in the Fourth district.

DCFS pays Bright Future a negotiated monthly rate, per child placement, established by the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) Funding and Rate Bureau. Based on the child's age, Bright Future receives between \$1,589 and \$1,865 per month, per child. Out of these amounts, Bright Future pays the foster parents between \$624 and \$790 per month, per child. For Fiscal Year 2003-04, DCFS paid Bright Future approximately \$1,430,000.

*"To Enrich Lives Through Effective and Caring Service"*

### **Purpose/Methodology**

The purpose of the review was to determine whether Bright Future was providing the services outlined in their Program Statement and County contract. We also evaluated Bright Future's ability to achieve planned staffing levels. Our monitoring visit included verifying whether Bright Future received the appropriate reimbursement rate for each child and whether the certified foster parents received their portion of the reimbursement rate in a timely manner. We reviewed certified foster parent files, children's case files, personnel files, and interviewed Bright Future's staff, the children and the foster parents. We also visited a sample of certified foster homes.

### **Results of Review**

Generally, Bright Future provided the services outlined in their County contract. The foster parents stated that the services they received from Bright Future met their expectations and that the children indicated that they enjoyed living with their foster parents. Bright Future also maintained the appropriate staffing levels and the Agency's social workers' case loads did not exceed the maximum allowed by CDSS Title 22.

Bright Future's monitoring of the foster homes does not always detect instances in which the homes did not comply with provisions of Title 22 and the County contract. For example, Bright Future did not consistently ensure that children on psychotropic medication have a current court authorization on file and foster parents maintain medication logs for children. Bright Future also did not complete an assessment to evaluate the ability of a foster home to effectively care for more than two children prior to placing more than two children in that home.

We recommend that Bright Future ensure that foster homes are in compliance with the County contract requirements and Title 22 Regulations. We also recommend that Bright Future ensure that staff conduct an assessment to evaluate a foster home's capability to provide quality care for more than two placements prior to placing more children in the home.

The details of our review, along with recommendation for corrective action, are attached.

### **Review of Report**

On February 1, 2005, we discussed our report with Bright Future who agreed with the findings. In their attached response, Bright Future management indicates the actions the agency has taken to implement the recommendations contained in the report. We also notified DCFS of the results of our review.

We thank Bright Future for their cooperation and assistance during this review. Please call me if you have any questions, or your staff may contact Don Chadwick at (626) 293-1102.

JTM:MMO:DC

Attachment

c: David E. Janssen, Chief Administrative Officer  
Department of Children and Family Services  
Dr. David Sanders, Director  
Angela Carter, Deputy Director  
Paul Freedlund, Deputy Director  
Ed Sosa, Division Chief Quality Assurance  
Dr. William Hill, South Bay Bright Future Foster Family Agency  
Colleen Anderson, Community Care Licensing  
Violet Varona-Lukens, Executive Officer  
Public Information Office  
Audit Committee

**COUNTYWIDE CONTRACT MONITORING DIVISION  
FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY PROGRAM  
FISCAL YEAR 2004-2005  
SOUTH BAY BRIGHT FUTURE FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY**

**PROGRAM SERVICES**

**Objective**

Determine whether South Bay Bright Future Foster Family Agency (Bright Future or Agency) provided program services in accordance with their County contract and California Department of Social Services (CDSS) Title 22 Regulations.

**Verification**

We visited four of the 33 Los Angeles County certified foster homes that Bright Future billed the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) for in June and July 2004 and interviewed the five foster parents and the eight children placed in the four homes. We also reviewed the documentation in their case files for the eight children and nine additional children who were taking psychotropic medication. In addition, we reviewed the Agency's monitoring activities.

**Results**

Bright Future's foster homes were well maintained and the foster children reported being happy with their placements. Bright Future social workers developed adequate Needs and Services Plans that addressed each child's educational and health needs. The Needs and Services Plans also addressed emancipation services available to the child when appropriate.

Bright Future needs to improve their monitoring of the foster homes to ensure that the foster homes are complying with all the provisions of Title 22 and the County. We specifically noted the following:

**Medical Services**

- For three of nine children sampled on psychotropic medications, Bright Future did not maintain current court authorizations. The County contract and Title 22 regulations require Agencies to maintain current court authorizations, updated every six months, for each child on psychotropic medication.
- For one of four foster homes visited, the foster parents did not maintain a daily medication log for a child on medication. The County contract and Title 22 requires Agencies to ensure that foster parents record the type, date, and time of all prescription and non-prescription medications administered to placed children.

Bright Future's annual and monthly monitoring of the foster homes does not include ensuring that daily medication logs are maintained.

### Foster Parent Certification

- For one of six foster parents interviewed, the parent did not obtain a health exam prior to being certified by Bright Future as required by the County contract and Title 22 regulations. Subsequent to our review, the foster parent obtained and passed a health exam.
- For one of the four foster homes visited, Bright Future did not conduct an assessment of the home prior to placing more than two children in the home, as required by the County contract. Subsequent to our review, the Agency performed an assessment and determined that the foster home was able to meet the needs of more than two children.

### Foster Home Visitations

- For one of four foster homes visited, sharp knives were not kept in a secured location and for two of four homes visited, toxins and detergents were also not stored in a secured location. The County contract and Title 22 regulations require that sharp knives, toxins and detergents be kept locked and inaccessible to children. Bright Future's monitoring of the foster homes does not ensure that sharp knives, toxins and detergents are locked, they only ensure that these items are inaccessible to children.
- For one of the four foster homes visited, the children did not have their own personal care items. Children were sharing shampoo, toothpaste and deodorant. The County contract and Title 22 requires Agencies to ensure that foster parents supply each child with their own personal hygiene and care items. Bright Future management stated that they do not monitor foster homes to ensure that each child is supplied with their own personal care items.

### Clothing and Allowance

- For one of the four foster homes visited, the foster parent did not maintain documentation to support monetary allowances paid to the children. Additionally, the foster parent was not completing a regular inventory of the children's clothing. The County contract and Title 22 requires Agencies to monitor to ensure that foster parents maintain a log indicating the date, the amount of allowance the child received and the child's signature. The County contract and Title 22 also require that the Agency ensure that a written inventory of each child's clothing is maintained and updated at least every six months. Bright Future's monitoring of the foster homes did not include ensuring allowance logs and clothing inventories are maintained.

**Miscellaneous Services**

- One of the eight children sampled, the child's age exceeded the maximum age that Bright Future could bill DCFS for services. The County contract requires the Agency to provide services to children ranging from infant to 17 years old, unless an exception is on file. The child turned 18 in March 2004, and the State did not grant the Agency an exception for the child until October 2004.

Bright Future needs to strengthen their monitoring efforts to ensure compliance with the County contract requirements and Title 22 regulations. We also recommend that Bright Future ensure that foster parents receive a health examination prior to being certified and that an assessment to evaluate the ability of the foster home to effectively care for more than two children is conducted prior to placing more than two children in a foster home.

**Recommendations****Bright Future management:**

1. **Ensure that foster homes are in compliance with the County contract requirements and Title 22 Regulations.**
2. **Ensure that foster parents receive a health exam prior to being certified by the Agency.**
3. **Conduct an assessment to evaluate a foster home's capability to provide quality care for more than two placements prior to placing more than two children in the home.**

**CLIENT VERIFICATION****Objective**

Determine whether the program participants actually received the services that Bright Future billed DCFS.

**Verification**

We interviewed eight children placed in four certified foster homes and the five foster parents to confirm the services Bright Future billed to DCFS.

**Results**

The program participants interviewed stated that the services received from Bright Future meet their expectations and their assigned social worker visited them regularly.

**Recommendation**

There are no recommendations for this section.

**STAFFING/CASELOAD LEVELS****Objective**

Determine whether Bright Future social workers' case loads do not exceed 15 placements and whether the supervising social worker does not supervise more than six social workers, as required by the County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations.

**Verification**

We interviewed Bright Future's supervising social worker and six social workers. Case load statistics and payroll records for June and July 2004 were also reviewed.

**Results**

Each of the Agency's six social workers maintained an average caseload of 12 placements. In addition, the supervising social worker supervised six social workers which is the maximum allowed by the County contract.

**Recommendation**

There are no recommendations for this section.

**STAFFING QUALIFICATIONS****Objective**

Determine whether Bright Future staff meet the education and work experience qualifications required by their County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations. In addition, determine whether Bright Future conducted hiring clearances prior to hiring their staff and provided ongoing training to staff.

**Verification**

We interviewed Bright Future's Administrator, supervising social worker and six social workers. In addition, we reviewed each staff's personnel file for documentation to confirm their education and work experience qualifications, hiring clearances and ongoing training.

**Results**

Bright Future's Administrator, supervising social worker and social workers possess the required education (college degrees) and work experience required by the County contract and Title 22 regulations. In addition, Bright Future completes hiring clearances for staff prior to them working on the County contract.

**Recommendation**

**There are no recommendations for this section.**



## South Bay Bright Future Youth Development Centers

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February 3, 2005

TO: Supervisor Gloria Molina, Chair  
Supervisor Yvonne B. Burke  
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky  
Supervisor Don Knabe  
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

FROM: Kathey Michelle Harry, LCSW  
Administrator



After reviewing the report from the Department of Auditor-Controller, South Bay Bright Future is in agreement with the findings and appreciates the following three recommendations to improve our compliance and care to abused and neglected children.

**Recommendation One: Improve monitoring to ensure that foster home comply with the County contract requirements and Title 22 Regulations.**

**Recommendation Two. Ensure that foster parents receive a health exam prior to being certified by the Agency.**

**Recommendation Three. Ensure that staff conduct an assessment to evaluate a foster home's capability to provide quality care for more than two placements prior to placing more children in the home.**

A corrective action plan was implemented immediately.

1. Administrator Kathey Michelle Harry, LCSW informed the social work staff, home inspector, certified foster parents and the quality assurance staff of the issues raised and provided education and tools for compliance. The home evaluation tool was revised to specifically monitor issues not monitored with the previous tool to address specific issues of Title 22 and the County contract.
2. Certified Foster Parents received a copy of the appropriate logs (medication, clothing, allowance) for their home files with an in-service training on the importance of maintaining documents within the home and reporting the monthly summary to the office.

3. Foster Parent Coordinator has been counseled on the importance of appropriate filing of documents and the requirement of certified foster parents having a health screen prior to certification. The Administrator will review prospective files prior to approval of certified foster parent.
4. The administrator will ensure that when a home is being considered for more than two children that the MSW will reassess the certified foster parent's capacity and skill level to provide care for more than two children. The home study will have an addendum in a narrative form specifically indicating the issues.

Cc: J. Tyler McCauley  
Dr. William M. Hill, CEO  
Bright Future Board of Directors